

Falling Away

Galatians 1:6-7 [Amplified Bible] *“I am surprised and astonished that you are so quickly turning renegade and deserting Him Who invited and called you, by the grace, unmerited favour of Christ, the Messiah, and that you are transferring your allegiance to a different, even an opposition gospel. Not that there is or could be any other genuine gospel, but there are some who are troubling, disturbing and bewildering you with a different kind of teaching which they offer as a gospel and want to pervert and distort the Gospel of Christ, the Messiah into something which it absolutely is not.”*

This was not the first time that the people who were called to fulfil a job of work for the Creator God, failed to maintain the loyalty to Him.

Jeremiah 15:6 [Amplified Bible] *“You have rejected and forsaken Me, says the Lord, you keep going in reverse. Therefore I have stretched out My hand against you and destroyed you, I am weary of relenting concerning your punishment.”*

2 Peter 3:17 [King James] *“Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own steadfastness.”*

The apostle Peter was concerned that false or misinterpreted scripture would cause people in the Church to be led away from their dedication to the truth, as expressed by their Saviour Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 2:1-2 [NIV] *“But there were also false prophets among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you. They will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who bought them, bringing swift destruction on themselves. Many will follow their shameful ways and will bring the way of truth into disrepute.”*

Just as there had been false prophets in the past, even today there are, among Christian fellowships, false teachers in positions of leadership. Note **many** will follow them.

Reasons for the backsliding or falling away –

1) The absence of true spiritual leaders –

Exodus 32:1, 7-8 [NIV] *“When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered round Aaron and said, ‘Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.’” ... “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.””*

Without Moses, God’s true leader being present the people soon turned to evil idolatry.

1 Samuel 15:10-12 [NIV] *“Then the word of the LORD came to Samuel: ‘I am grieved that I have made Saul king, because he has turned away from me and has not carried out my instructions.’ Samuel was troubled, and he cried out to the LORD all that night. Early in the morning Samuel got up and went to meet Saul, but he was told, ‘Saul has gone to Carmel. There he has set up a monument in his own honour and has turned and gone on down to Gilgal.’”*

When Samuel, God’s prophet, was absent, King Saul turned away from doing what he had been commanded to do by God.

1 Samuel 15:24-28 [NIV] *“Then Saul said to Samuel, ‘I have sinned. I violated the LORD’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the people and so I gave in to them. Now I beg you,*

forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the LORD.’ But Samuel said to him, ‘I will not go back with you. You have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you as king over Israel!’ As Samuel turned to leave, Saul caught hold of the hem of his robe, and it tore. Samuel said to him, ‘The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today and has given it to one of your neighbours, to one better than you.’”

This turning away from the Creator God cost Saul his kingship in the Kingdom of Israel.

A similar falling away could cost us our position in the Kingdom of God.

Our future must **not** depend on true leadership in the Christian Church, for it is our personal relationship with God our Creator that will determine our future.

2) Evil associations –

1 Kings 3:5-10 [NIV] *“At Gibeon the LORD appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, ‘Ask for whatever you want me to give you.’ Solomon answered, ‘You have shown great kindness to your servant, my father David, because he was faithful to you and righteous and upright in heart. You have continued this great kindness to him and have given him a son to sit on his throne this very day. Now, O LORD my God, you have made your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people you have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So give your servant a discerning heart to govern your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of yours?’ The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this.”*

Solomon made a very good start to his reign but this did **not** last.

1 Kings 11:1-4 [NIV] *“King Solomon, however, loved many foreign women besides Pharaoh’s daughter, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians and Hittites. They were from nations about which the LORD had told the Israelites, ‘You must not intermarry with them, because they will surely turn your hearts after their gods.’ Nevertheless, Solomon held fast to them in love. He had seven hundred wives of royal birth and three hundred concubines, and his wives led him astray. As Solomon grew old, his wives turned his heart after other gods, and his heart was not fully devoted to the LORD his God, as the heart of David his father had been.”*

The influence of Solomon’s wives led him to forsake the Creator God for pagan worship.

Exodus 23:2 [Amplified Bible] *“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil...”*

We all face pressure from others when our personal commitment to our Creator God causes us to be only one in a crowd.

1 Corinthians 5:11 [NIV] *“But now I am writing to you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.”*

Such companionship will only place us under pressure to leave our moral convictions aside. **[1 Corinthians 15:33]**

2 Corinthians 6:14-16 [NIV] *“Do not be yoked together with unbelievers. For what do righteousness and wickedness have in common? Or what fellowship can light have with darkness? What harmony is there between Christ and Belial? What does a believer have in common with an unbeliever? What agreement is there between the temple of God and idols? For we are the temple of the living God. As God has said: ‘I will live with them and walk among them, and I will be their God, and they will be my people.’”*

Even if our association with another non-Christian is only in the area of work, it can be putting ourselves in a dangerous position. **[Psalms 1:1]**

3) Worldly success –

2 Chronicles 25:1-3, 14 [NIV] *“Amaziah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem for twenty-nine years. His mother’s name was Jehoadin; she was from Jerusalem. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, but not wholeheartedly. After the kingdom was firmly in his control, he executed the officials who had murdered his father the king.” ... “When Amaziah returned from slaughtering the Edomites, he brought back the gods of the people of Seir. He set them up as his own gods, bowed down to them and burned sacrifices to them.”*

After God had helped Amaziah to establish the kingdom, he turned to pagan gods.

Under Moses God brought Israel out of slavery in Egypt and settled them in a pleasant land but they then turned their back on their Creator God and Saviour. [**Psalms 78:42-59**]

Mark 4:18-19 [NIV] *“Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.”*

The deceitfulness of wealth makes us consider that we can live an enjoyable life without our Creator God being a part of it.

All the wisdom in God’s Word, the Christian Bible, is choked out of our life.

1 Timothy 6:9 [NIV] *“People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction.”*

The only way to avoid all such ruin and destruction is found in **verses 6-8** of same chapter.

4) Shallowness –

Luke 8:11, 13 [Amplified Bible] *“Now the meaning of the parable is this, the seed is the Word of God ... and those upon the rock, are the people who, when they heard the Word, receive and welcome it with joy, but these have no root, they believe for a while, and in time of trial and temptation fall away, withdraw and stand aloof.”*

Such people are “emotional hearers” only. [**Matthew 8:18-22; Luke 11:27-28; Proverbs 25:14**]

Galatians 4:18 [King James] *“But it is good to be zealously affected always in a good thing, and not only when I am present with you.”*

It is good to have a zealous attitude towards our Christian life, as long as it is based on the truth as found in the Word of God, the Christian Bible.

But a zealous attitude alone will **not** protect you from the zealous desires of false teachers. [**v17**]

John 6:66 [NIV] *“From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.”*

Why did they turn away?

They could **not** accept the deep teaching that Jesus Christ had just given. [see **verses 53-60**]

James 2:26 [Amplified Bible] *“For as the human body apart from the [human] spirit is lifeless, so faith apart from works of obedience is also dead.”*

Words and promises are of **no** value unless they lead to action on our part.

Galatians 6:7-10 [NIV] *“Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows*

to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

We must **not** be Christians who **“talk the talk but do not walk the walk.”**

2 Peter 2:17-22 [NIV] *“These men are springs without water and mists driven by a storm. Blackest darkness is reserved for them. For they mouth empty, boastful words and, by appealing to the lustful desires of sinful human nature, they entice people who are just escaping from those who live in error. They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity, for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him. If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.’”*

Failing to apply what we have been shown by the Holy Spirit revealing the Word of God, the Christian Bible to us [**John 16:13; 1 Corinthians 2:9-14**], this is how we look to our Creator God and Saviour.

5) Lack of spiritual insight –

Proverbs 29:18 [Living Bible] *“Where there is ignorance of God, the people run wild; but what a wonderful thing it is for a nation to know and keep His laws!”*

We can see the physical and social results of a Godless society around us today.

Amos 8:11-13 [NIV] *“‘The days are coming,’ declares the Sovereign LORD, ‘when I will send a famine through the land, not a famine of food or a thirst for water, but a famine of hearing the words of the LORD. Men will stagger from sea to sea and wander from north to east, searching for the word of the LORD, but they will not find it. ‘In that day’ the lovely young women and strong young men will faint because of thirst.’”*

The people had **no** appetite for God’s Word when His true prophet brought it to them, because of their apathy. God then warned that He would take away even the opportunity to hear His Word, the Christian Bible, from His true ministers.

At this time we still have available the Christian Bible, yet most still look everywhere for answers to problems except the Creator God’s own words.

But time is fast running out before Satan blinds all people totally to the gospel message of hope for all humanity. [**2 Corinthians 4:4**]

2 Corinthians 4:16 [Amplified Bible] *“Therefore we do not become discouraged, utterly spiritless, exhausted and wearied out through fear. Though our outer man is progressively decaying and wasting away, yet our inner self is being progressively renewed day after day.”*

Only through such dedicated study of God’s Word, the Christian Bible, day by day, can we avoid the lack of spiritual insight.

6) Love of the world –

1 John 2:15-17 [NIV] *“Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes and the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father but from the world. The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives for ever.”*

John warns us **not** to love this society and its style of living, however attractive it may look on the surface.

John 17:15-17 [NIV] *“My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.”*

The apostle John was basing his warning on what he had heard his Master, Jesus Christ, pray. Obedience to the Truth, Jesus Christ [**John 14:6**], would set the disciples of Jesus Christ apart from the rest of the God-less world.

2 Timothy 4:10 [NIV] *“for Demas, because he loved this world, has deserted me and has gone to Thessalonica. Crescens has gone to Galatia, and Titus to Dalmatia.”*

Demas turned his back on being a disciple of Jesus Christ because of love of this world.

This can happen to any Christian who is **not** remaining close to their Saviour, Jesus Christ.

What are the end results of falling away? –

Become unfit to be part of the Kingdom of God, the created family of God. –

Luke 9:62 [NIV] *“Jesus replied, ‘No-one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.’”*

This was the comment Jesus Christ gave about those who were not totally and continually committed to following Him.

Loss of spiritual enthusiasm –

Revelation 2:4-5 [NIV] *“Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken your first love. Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.”*

Unless repented of, the hope of eternal life is lost.

Divine displeasure –

Hebrews 10:35-39 [NIV] *“So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised. For in just a very little while, ‘He who is coming will come and will not delay. But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him.’ But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.”*

Make sure we do **not** “shrink back” **from our commitment to our Saviour, Jesus Christ.**

2 Peter 2:20-22 [NIV] *“If they have escaped the corruption of the world by knowing our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ and are again entangled in it and overcome, they are worse off at the end than they were at the beginning. It would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it and then to turn their backs on the sacred command that was passed on to them. Of them the proverbs are true: ‘A dog returns to its vomit,’ and, ‘A sow that is washed goes back to her wallowing in the mud.’”*

The person who, having been shown what human life is for and how they can receive the gift of eternal life, turns their back on Jesus Christ, becomes a revolting sight in the eyes of their Creator God.